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CHRISTIAN DEMONOLOGY.

IV.

IN the discussion of certain salient problems, suggested by the data already before us, with which I shall conclude, I shall try to repeat as little as I can of the evidence already adduced. To this final discussion, therefore, I now pass.

1. And the first problem is that of the use of the name.

Problem of the use of the name. Why did Jesus instruct his disciples to cast out demons in his *name*? Why do we end our prayers with the formula "in the *name* of Jesus Christ our Lord"? Why did the Christians glory in the *name*? Why were they persecuted for the *name*? The answer to all these questions is furnished by ancient magic.

The magical use of a name as revealed in the many examples I have given from Origen, Celsus, Lucian, Porphyry and the papyri, is in all respects the same as was the use among the ancient Babylonians over 3000 years before Christ. "Like all primitive peoples," writes Prof. Sayce¹, "the Chaldaeans confounded the person and the name by which he was known. The name in fact was the personality, and whatever happened to the name would happen to the personality. When² the gods lost their names they lost their individual personality as well. Injury³ could be done to a person by using his name in a spell, and, similarly, to pronounce the name of a deity

¹ Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, IV, p. 302.

² Ibid. p. 305.

³ Ibid. p. 302.

compelled him to attend to the wishes of the priest or exorcist . . . The sacredness attached to the name of the God of Israel among the later Jews, and the frequent employment of the name for the person of the Lord, bear witness to the fact (viz. that the same superstition was deeply imprinted on the Semitic mind)."

"The preservation of their names," remarks the same writer¹, "was a matter about which the kings of Babylonia and Assyria were especially anxious. Terrible curses are enacted against those who should destroy or injure the writing of their names, and substitute their own names instead."

This is a point which in the consideration of old historical documents must not be forgotten. We often find that in old historical records everything in the way of action and incident is freely changed by successive scribes, except lists of names. These are more faithfully handed down than anything else. We may be sure that there was a superstitious scruple as well as a political dislike at work in the erasure from monuments of a name like that of Commodus and the substitution of one less ill-omened.

"Closely² connected with the mystical importance thus assigned to names, was the awe and dread with which the curse or excommunication was regarded. Once uttered with the appropriate ceremonies, the binding of knots and the invocation of divine names, it was a spell which even the gods were powerless to resist."

Nor was this belief confined to Semitic races. "The whole Aryan family," says Prof. Rhys³, "believed at one time, not only that his name was part of a man, but that it was the part of him which is termed the soul, the breath of life."

Now the use of the name Jesus Christ in prayers and exorcisms is based on the same belief in a mysterious con-

¹ Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, IV, p. 304.

² *Ibid.* p. 305.

³ Rhys on "Welsh Fairies," *Nineteenth Century*, Oct. 1891, p. 566.

nexion and almost identity between the name and the person named which Origen explicitly insists upon—appealing to Aristotle in support of his belief. The Christians invoked Jesus against the demons and he came, and from his presence, all unseen, like their own, they fled. Nor only this. Jesus had possessed a peculiar divine power or *dunamis*, which entered into him at baptism and which, according to the Gospel of Peter, and to many other early sources, left him when about to die. This power was along with the name of Christ and with baptism into that name mystically communicated to the believer. To invoke the name was to summon the power indissolubly bound up therewith, to invest ourselves therewith, to become one with it and gain at least for the nonce a control over the unseen world such as the Messiah possessed. So the use of a demon's name, according to Tertullian¹, however empty and fictitious it might be, yet brought in an instant to your aid the demon or unclean spirit, if you intoned it in a superstitious spirit; such was the binding power over the spirit of a holy name.

The modern Abyssinian believes in the demons being constantly on the watch to steal if they can a Christian's baptismal name². His idea of course is that the demons will use the stronger names to work their own evil ends. In baptism a mystical union with Jesus and communication of his powers to the worshipper was effected by calling over him the holy name.

If we examine the passages in the New Testament in which the word *name* is used, we shall find
 In the N. T. the name = the personality. that they imply on the part of the writers this belief in a mysterious connexion between the name and the personality or power of the named.
 Thus we read Matt. vii. 22, "Many will say unto me in

¹ *De Idololat.*, ch. 15: "Utique scimus, licet nomina inania atque conficta sint, cum tamen in superstitionem deducuntur, rapere ad se daemonia et omnem spiritum immundum per consecrationis obligamentum."

² Lejean, *Voyage en Abyssinie*, p. 78.

that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy *name*? and by thy *name* cast out devils? and by thy *name* work many powers?" The allusion is to false prophets, to whom Jesus will reply: I never knew you. But though corrupt in their fruits it is clear that by the mere use of the name of the Lord Jesus they would achieve supernatural results; just as in Mark ix. 38, John informed Jesus that he had seen an unbeliever casting out devils in Jesus' *name*. It is clear that such a use of Jesus' name was identical with the use of the names of Jewish patriarchs in magical incantations; and, accordingly, in magical recipes we find the name of Jesus Christ juxtaposed with the tetragrammaton, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and even with heathen deities. Of such juxtaposition I will give a single instance¹: "Here is a goodly gift of Apsyrtus, a saving remedy, wonderfully effective for cattle. IAO, IAE, in the name of father and of our Lord Jesus Christ and holy spirit, iriterli estather, nochthai brasax, Salolam nakarzeo masa areons daron charael aklanathal aketh thruth tou malath poumedoin chthon chthon litiotan mazabates maner opsakion, aklanathalila iao, iae in the name of father and of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the holy spirit. And write the same with a brass pencil on a clean smooth plate of tin." To return to the New Testament²: "Where two or three are gathered together into my name, there am I in the midst of them." Here the use of the name actually brings the power named into the circle of worshippers, or, as Tertullian says: "rapit ad se daemonem per consecrationis obligamentum." "And on Simon he laid the name Petros, and on James and John the name Boanerges, or Sons of Thunder." The new names were supposed to impart to them new qualities or fortify their moral characters, or even to protect them from the evil demons which would, by a change of name, be thrown off the track. Such a change almost certainly had a mystical import like the change of Abram

¹ Cp. *Incantation from Hippicr.*, p. 128, c. 1206, ap. Ric. Heim, l. c.

² Matt. xviii. 20.

into Abraham. It is still a belief among Jews that you can save a sick man's life by changing his name. The new name makes him another person, and presumably the Angel of Death is baffled and unable to identify him. For a somewhat similar reason on the occasion of a public purification at Rome persons with lucky names (*prospera nomina*) were selected to lead the victims to the altars¹.

A convert to the Latin church receives, I believe, a new name, often that of his guardian angel or patron saint. In this way he not only dodges the devils, but acquires as well the prestige, power, and protection of the superior name². Philo relates how an unbeliever who scoffed at the extra letter which God in his goodness added to Abram's name was struck down with death for his blasphemy.

We read in the account of the Essenes given in Josephus³ Parallel Es- that they had a secret knowledge of the *names* sene belief. of the angels, which members of the brotherhood swore not to divulge. Their congeners, the Therapeutae of Alexandria, who occupied themselves with the mystical interpretation of Old Testament names, had among themselves a faculty of healing superior to that which is practised in cities. This perhaps means that they invoked holy names in order to heal the sick.

And this interpretation of Old Testament names in a half-etymological, half-mystical manner, was a chief occupation of Philo, who never wearies of telling his readers that in all Scripture names are contained wondrously beautiful conceptions and hidden meanings; and though he does not regard names after the superstitious manner of his age, yet it was no doubt the prevalent belief in the

¹ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, XXVIII, 5.

² In the excerpts of Theodotion, ch. 22, who wrote in the last half of the second century, we have an allusion to this custom: ἵν' ἡ βεβαπτισμένος ὁ τὴν λύτρωσιν κομισάμενος τῷ αὐτῷ ὀνόματι, ᾧ καὶ ὁ ἄγγελος αὐτοῦ προβεβάπτισται: "That he who has won redemption may have been baptized with the same name with which was baptized before him his guardian angel." This reference, with much other matter, I owe to Dr. P. Ruben.

³ Jos., *B. J.*, II, 142.

efficacy of names which led him to attach so much importance to the allegorical exposition of their meanings.

The disciples then were to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost¹. . . That is to say, by means of the theurgic invocation in baptism, the fullness and power of the triple Godhead was to be communicated to the believer and dwell in him; as it had dwelt bodily in Jesus. "By my name shall they cast out devils, speak with tongues, take up serpents, lay hands on the sick²," and so forth. Such a use as this, was, as I have already pointed out, purely magical and theurgic. It was not only a way of introducing the pure spirit and of banishing the impure. It was also a subsidy against the noxious reptiles that in the old Persian religion were the special creations and instruments of Angra Manyu.

"Blessed are ye when men shall hate you . . . and cast out your *name* as evil, for the son of man's sake³." This seems to imply not the mere erasure of a name from records, but its exorcism as in itself a sinister power. As in the case of the ancient Assyrians, so here the mere erasure of the name was tantamount to annulling the owners' power and personality.

"He gave the right to become children of God to them that believe in his *name*" (*ἐἰς τὸ ὄνομα*)⁴; i. e. the power of Jesus and his authority over the seen and unseen worlds of men and spirits was bound up with his name.

"Whatsoever ye shall ask in my *name* ye shall receive it"⁵; i. e. because the authority of Jesus was irresistible. "I manifested thy *name*," says Jesus addressing the Father⁶. "Holy Father, keep them in thy *name* which thou hast given to me . . . I guarded them and not one of them perished . . . I made known unto them thy *name*, and will make it known; that the love wherewith thou lovedst me may be in them, and I in them⁷." So the Jews believed

¹ Matt. xxviii. 19.

² Mark xvi. 17.

³ Luke vi. 22.

⁴ John i. 12.

⁵ Ibid. xiv. 14.

⁶ Ibid. xvii. 6 and 11.

⁷ Ibid. xvii. 26.

that Jesus had gained a knowledge of the mysterious and not to be divulged name of God, and in that manner acquired his supernatural powers.

"By what *power* or in what *name* have ye done this¹?" is the question put by the priests to Peter, who had cured the man who was lame from his mother's womb. And it was a question which could only have been asked by people conversant and themselves imbued with the belief in the magical efficacy of names. And Peter in reply quotes no doubt the full title, the use of which had effected the cure. "Be it known unto you all, that *by the name* of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by this *name* doth this man stand here before you whole²." . . . "For," adds Peter, "there is no other *name* under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved³." And just below the faithful pray to God that signs and wonders may be done "through the *name* of thy holy servant Jesus."

Gallio did not care about names any more than Lucian, but his words to the Jews⁴: "If these be Gallio on names. questions about words and *names* and your own law," betray his knowledge of the magical use of names among the natives of his province. They might flog their evil spirits with any names they chose, so long as their quarrel about what name was most efficacious did not lead to overt breaches of the *pax Romana*. It was a matter for the Jews to settle among themselves whether demons were to be expelled by one name rather than by another. His court could not decide a point so metaphysical. Jesus, we read in Hebrews⁵, had inherited a more excellent *name* than the angels, and so become by so much better than they, as to sit down on the right hand of God. God, we read in the same epistle⁶, "is not unrighteous to forget the love which ye showed toward his

¹ Acts iv. 7.

⁴ Ibid. xviii. 15.

² Ibid. iv. 10.

⁵ Heb. i. 4.

³ Ibid. iv. 12.

⁶ Ibid. vi. 10.

name, in ministering to the saints." Love of the name was equivalent to love of the spirit called by the name. "This *name* was above every name that is named, one in which every knee should bend¹."

"Many shall come in my *name*," says Jesus, "saying I am the Christ²." A passage which indicates that it was the Messianic authority or name to which these pretenders would lay claim. The same identification of name with person is instanced in such a phrase as meets us in Acts i. 15: "There was a multitude gathered together of *names* about 120." So in Apocal. iii. 4: "Thou hast a few *names* in Sardis which did not defile their garments."

The same identification of name with object or person named is wide spread among savages, one of Similar be- named is wide spread among savages, one of
liefs of whom will tell you anything sooner than his
savages. name; because to know his name is to have
a hold over him; since it gives you a faculty of using him and his personality. Therefore in Arabic tales the first thing to do with a ginn or spirit is to find out his name, as a preliminary to availing yourself of his power. Thus it is that in old Georgian, *Sakheli*, the word for name, means, that which gives power.

The references to the magical use of the name are specially common in the Apocalypse. We hear of a white stone on which a new *name* was written which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it³. This stone, the prize of Christian endurance, reminds us of the tablets on which powerful names were inscribed in antiquity. Of the same champions of the faith we also read as follows⁴: "I will write upon him the *name* of my God and the *name* of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem . . . and mine own new *name*." So later on we hear of the 144,000 having the *name* of the Lamb and the *name* of his Father written on their foreheads⁵. So the Hindoos paint each the sign of his particular caste on the forehead; and the old Armenian

¹ Eph. i. 21 and Phil. ii. 9.

² Matt. xxiv. 5.

³ Rev. ii. 17.

⁴ Ibid. iii. 12.

⁵ Ibid. xiv. 1; xxii. 4.

word for fate or horoscope means simply "what is written on the forehead." The same idea was at work in baptism and led to the setting of the cross on the catechumen's forehead, in addition to immersion in a holy stream. The *names* of blasphemy which the seven-headed apocalyptic beast bore on his heads were the names of heathen gods¹. And the Word of God had a *name* written on his head which no one knoweth but himself². The object of writing the most powerful of all names or of impressing the cross—the trade-mark of that name and power—on the forehead was this, that being so conspicuous it might frighten off the demons and hinder their very approach.

To sum up. Jesus, the Messiah, in enjoining the use of his name, and his followers in using it, moved in a circle of ideas as old as the oldest written records we have of our race, namely the cuneiform tablets of ancient Assyria. Yet, as we find among primitive races all over the globe the same superstition about names, we need not necessarily suppose that the Greeks and Jews of the first and succeeding centuries derived the belief from ancient Babylon; though they probably did so, since the Chaldaean were regarded all round the Mediterranean as born magicians. No fact is better calculated to impress on our minds the continuity of religious traditions and practices than this, that in adding to our prayers the phrase "in or by the *name* of Jesus Christ our Lord," we repeat a theurgic formula, and adhere to a magic ritual, which were in vogue in Babylon some six thousand years ago. I do not mean, of course, that the God invoked by us is the same as was theirs—though I should be glad to think so; but the mode of invocation or the method of compelling an answer to our prayers is the same.

2. And perhaps in our investigations we have hit upon the origin of creeds. Why did the Church invent these compendious statements of the chief events in the history of

¹ Rev. xiii. 1; xvii. 3.

² Ibid. xix. 12.

Jesus the Messiah? In the earliest age a creed could hardly have been used,—as it came to be used in the fourth century,—to winnow away the chaff of heresy from the wheat of true believers.

The preaching of the various apostles must have been something more extended and less jejune than these condensations of the Messiah's history. Judging from the Acts and from Paul's letters, and equally from the Didachê, any statement of doctrine meant for the *instruction* of believers would have included some moral precepts. I believe, therefore, that one reason at least for the formation of the earliest creeds was the want of a short and effective formula for the exorcism of demons. Jesus had indeed enjoined the mere use of his name; but his followers soon found that this was not enough; and so Origen¹ informs us that to the name was added the ἀπαγγελία τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν ἱστοριῶν, i.e. an announcement of the history of Jesus, which was all the more effective if the exorcist who sang out (κατεπαδόντων τοὺς δαίμονας) the demons honestly, believed it. Such an ἀπαγγελία would be the appropriate string of words (συμφυοῦς εἰρμοῦ) which, he elsewhere informs us², must follow a name in exorcisms. It is not clear, however, that a passage from the gospels was not also read or recited; for a "reporting of the history of Jesus" may mean that; as may the phrase "teaching from the holy scriptures" (τὰ ἀπὸ τῶν ἱερῶν γραμμάτων μαθήματα) which he uses elsewhere³. Anyhow, he plainly hints at a form of creed similar to the so-called Apostles' Creed when he says⁴ that his contemporaries cast out demons by simply calling over the sufferers the name of Almighty God and the name of Jesus along with his history. My theory is confirmed by the fact already observed that probably Peter used such an epitome of Jesus' history in healing the lame man; while almost the earliest form of creed known—I allude to the one in Justin Martyr—is clearly part of an exorcism.

¹ Origen, *C. Cels.* i. 6.

² *Ibid.* i. 24.

³ *Ibid.* vii. 67.

⁴ *Ibid.* iii. 24.

In the *Apology of Aristides*¹ there also occurs an early form of creed, as Mr. Rendel Harris has observed, not very unlike the Apostles' Creed; and it is remarkable that Aristides, as translated by him, says of it: "This is *taught from* that Gospel which a little while ago was spoken among them as being preached." The phrase of Origen, ἀπὸ τῶν ἱερῶν γραμμάτων μαθήματα, i.e. *teachings from* the scriptures, practically translates the Syriac phrase in Aristides; and we may conclude that such was the early name by which a creed was designated; the more so as Origen insists on the need of the exorcist *believing* the history which he recited to the demons. When Aristides in the same context dwells upon the *power* inherent in his summary of Christ's history and exhorts the Roman emperor to read the Gospel in order to comprehend that power, we seem to have a reference to the effectiveness of that creed, as a weapon against the powers of evil who must be put to flight before the Holy Spirit can enter and dwell in the souls of men.

But surely some one may ask, Were there not other ends ^{Baptismal} in view of which the earliest creeds are more ^{use of creed.} likely to have been drawn up? Were they not rather meant to be recited by converts at baptism?

It is certainly true that Irenaeus² declares the creed to be a canon of truth accepted by every one at baptism, which the entire Church had by tradition received from the Apostles. Origen³ equally speaks of the "ecclesiastica praedicatio per successionis ordinem ab apostolis tradita." And there can be no question of the connexion from a very remote epoch of the creed with baptism, which was indeed the only ceremony at which in the earliest ages a creed was formally recited.

This much is clear, that the Apostles' Creed so called is an expansion of the simple formula: "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," into which, according to

¹ *Apol. Aristid.*, ed. Harris, § ii.

² Iren. I, i. 20.

³ Origen, *Prooem. de Princ.*, 23.

Matthew¹, the disciples were bidden by Jesus to baptize all nations. And though in other parts of the New Testament we hear of baptism in the name of Jesus Christ alone, there can be no doubt as to the antiquity of the triple formula, since all churches however scattered have everywhere used it in baptism. The only question at issue is this. Was the formula enjoined in Matthew (or the simpler one referred to) expanded, as we already find it to be in Justin and in Aristides, in order to provide converts with a summary of their new faith to be repeated on the occasion of baptism; or, on the other hand, in order to furnish the demons with more explicit information about the higher power in whose name they were commanded to go forth? Of course both these necessities at once may have worked to expand the brief formula into one more comprehensive. But we must bear in mind that the rite of baptism was preceded from a very early epoch by an exorcism of the evil spirits which in the imagination of the very earliest Christians filled the air, and in particular beset the body of one who had been an idolater. The formula used in this exorcism, which prepared the way for the reception, through the water, of the Holy Spirit, was probably such an one as Justin has handed down to us, in which the demon is adjured to depart "in the name of the Son of God and first-born of every creature, who was born of the Virgin and became man, capable of suffering, was crucified under Pontius Pilate by your (i. e. by the Jewish) people, and died and rose again from the dead, and ascended into heaven." This formula contains, it is true, allusion to the Virgin as well as an anti-Docetic clause, "capable of suffering" (*παθητοῦ*), which is only appropriate to a period beginning about A.D. 80, and cannot be much older than that. So the baptismal canon of faith put forward as Apostolic and universal by Irenaeus² has an anti-Valentinian ring, as Harvey well shows. For the rest, however,

¹ Matt. xxviii. 19.

² See *Irenaeus*, ed. Harvey, vol. I, p. 90, n. 1.

and excepting the reference to the Virgin birth, Justin's formula of exorcism is very similar to that used by Peter, as we can infer the latter from Acts iv. 10. With the creed of Aristides it is nearly identical. I should infer, therefore, that the expanded formula, or recitation of the redeeming acts of the Lord, "was first used in the exorcisms which delivered the Christian out of the power of darkness, and were so preliminary to the accession of the Holy Spirit and to the translation into the kingdom of the Son of God's love¹." Having been used by the exorcist they would naturally be also repeated by the convert who was being baptized. And his formal recital of them as a profession of faith would be the natural complement to the exorcist's previous use of them, and would materially hasten the exit of the demons out of himself.

But whichever way we decide, it is most significant of the great importance attached to the expulsion of demons in the primitive church, that the very earliest creedlike formulæ occur in connexion with cures and exorcisms. This much is certain. And as it is so probable that creeds were in the first instance drawn up less for the instruction of men than of demons, we ought, I think, to be doubly charitable to those who differ from ourselves on such points.

3. A third point which is suggested by the facts we have reviewed is this. The New Testament, especially Dualism in the N. T. the writings of John and Paul, are often very dualistic in tone and tendency, much more so indeed than those of Philo, whom it is the fashion to set down as an oriental dualist. John regards this world as altogether given up to Satan; and Jesus Christ is not of this world at all, no more is his kingdom. "The world knew him not." Equally to Paul is Satan the ruler of this world; and in his belief the atmosphere and heaven are alive with evil spirits. Justin Martyr (*Dial.* ch. 105) declares, and rightly, that the whole purport of Christ's last prayer on the cross

¹ *Dict. of Bible*, art. Exorcism; Col. i. 13.

(Luke xxiii. 46), "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit," after which he yielded up his ghost, was that the shameless and wicked demons who haunt the atmosphere and are always on the watch to grab a dying man's soul, might be baffled by the Father's receiving it direct into his own hands. How different this from Philo who discarded

the belief in evil spirits as superstitious, and only allowed the existence of destroying angels in the sense of ministers of God's just wrath;—
more marked than in Philo and the Talmud.
 and for whom also the august gods of Greece, far from being base demons, were identical with the stars of heaven, immortal and holy natures! The oldest Talmud also, though it often mentions evil spirits and exorcism of them by means of the tetragrammaton, is yet less dualistic than the New Testament, for it does not contemplate a rival kingdom of evil, really antagonistic to the divine creator. Therefore it is that we so rarely find in it the titles so common in the New Testament of Satan, Beliar, Beelzebul, Devil, Adversary; or such a phrase as the kingdom of Satan. No doubt the authors of the earliest Talmud wished to avoid any violation of the monotheistic idea, and therefore banished such phrases.

The New Testament is often dualistic with the dualism of the Persians; and, in reading it, one can easily comprehend how and why the heresy of Marcion should have arisen. There is not a little in the fourth Gospel and in Paul's epistles upon which Marcion and the Manichees could base their peculiar teaching, which was but a slight accentuation in other respects also of Paul's beliefs. And this teaching also agrees with the rôle assigned to Jesus as the Messiah by his followers and probably claimed by himself. He was the victor of demons, the rescuer of man from the clutches of Satan. It was not the visible legions of Rome that he was to break and subdue, but the invisible legions of Satan by whom mankind was oppressed. There seems to have been a Persian element in the mind of Jesus alien to true Judaism.

4. And fourthly, we may notice once more how similar in their modes of operation the evil spirit and the good spirit were supposed to be. Inspiration was no other than possession by a good spirit.

Good and evil spirits of similar composition. We see this brought out in the Latin ritual of baptism, in which the priest breathes three times in the child's face, saying: "Come out of this child, thou evil spirit, and make room for the Holy Ghost¹." For as we saw in reading the Shepherd—a very primitive monument of the Roman Church—the Holy Spirit requires plenty of room, being light and ethereal, and is strangled and suffocated by the presence along with itself in the same vessel of evil spirits which are crass and heavy.

The truth is that the Apostles had the same conception of spirit which held its own even in philosophy until the age of Descartes and is still entertained by the vulgar. They regarded a spirit as a form of wind; for wind moves and shakes objects; yet to the unscientific mind it is without weight even as it is invisible. The demons lived in the air and were made of air, and were like the air immaterial (*ἀσώματοι*), and as a rule invisible. The better spirits, however, and in particular the Holy Spirit, were emanations of the

Evil spirits made of heavy air. Holy Spirit of fiery ether. divine and subtle ether which surrounds the entire world and of which the stars are made. This ether was fiery in texture and rational; and the human reason, the only purely divine element in man, was, according to Philo, an *ἀπαύγασμα* or off-raying thereof. This is why the angels had bodies of fire, as Aristides² is careful to inform us.

¹ Lenormant (*Hist. Anc.*, livre VI, p. 200) cites an ancient Assyrian formula similar to the above. It is this: "Let the evil demons depart. Let them fall on one another. But let the propitious demon and the propitious colossus penetrate and enter his body." This, remarks Lenormant, was the best security against the return of the evil spirits, and is to be likened to the divine grace or odour of sanctity replacing in the convert the state of sin and devotion to the Devil.

² Aristid. *Apol.* § 2.

The description of the descent of the Holy Spirit in Acts¹ well exemplifies the philosophical categories of that age. It came down from heaven, Pentecostal descent of the Holy Spirit. which was a tract of ether spread out above the grosser atmosphere, the earth being of course regarded as fixed and flat. It made a noise as of the rushing of a mighty wind, for though more subtle than the vaporous air along the earth's surface, it was still gaseous and was to the earthly spirits somewhat as hydrogen is to carbonic acid gas. Being of this character it could fill all the house where the faithful sat, just as air rushes in at an open door or window. "And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder like as of fire, and it sat upon each one of them." For being fiery in nature the Holy Spirit would project itself into tongues of lambent flame shooting here and there. It is noteworthy that exactly similar portents are related in the *Aeneid* in connexion with the young Iulus. In the very primitive Syriac text of the Acts which Ephrem Syrus used in writing his commentary, the Holy Spirit filled the upper chamber on the day of Pentecost not only with a bright light but with a *sweet smell*. For in that age you could recognize a god's presence by the fragrant smell and odour of sanctity which attended it. As says Ovid: "mansit odor; posses scire fuisse deam."

In the Hebrew Gospel also the Holy Spirit's descent on Jesus at the Jordan was attended by a flame-like appearance shining over the waters, and it was with the Spirit and *with fire* that Jesus promised to baptize the faithful. I have already noticed how Jesus, like the Egyptian wise men whom Celsus saw, or like Lucian's Chaldaean, blew upon his disciples; so communicating to them through his breath the Holy Spirit and no doubt dissipating and driving out the crasser spirits, as we can see done to this day at a Roman Catholic baptism. At the baptism of

¹ Acts ii. 2-4.

Jesus the Holy Spirit even materialized itself as a dove and entered—according to the oldest account—*into* Jesus, just as the evil spirit entered *into* a man's body.

I need not dwell further on the uniform and mechanical way in which all spirits, good or bad alike, acted. In that age popular thought had not yet risen to a truer conception of spirit as a simply conscious agency, which is where it acts instead of acting only where it is, and which only being what it does, has no need of a substrate of more or less attenuated or fiery vapour to serve as its substance and as the vehicle of its expression.

This mechanical and materialistic conception of spirit and of spiritual operations also determined the earliest ideas of the Incarnation, and was at the bottom of a great deal of early Docetism. The divine Logos, for example, according to Irenaeus and the earliest fathers, simply thrust out, annihilated and took the place of the human soul in Jesus; just as the Holy Spirit displaced the human understanding in those who talked with tongues, or as a demon took possession of a man, body and soul. In Docetism the idea was carried further, and Jesus had an ethereal body, such as had, according to Philo¹, the angels that visited Abraham, on which occasion, as he carefully explains, they ate and drank in appearance only.

5. Prof. Tylor in his work on primitive culture describes how in India a Brahman may be seen sitting by the roadside putting the god into the little hollow images of clay brought to him by the faithful. I have seen it done myself. Now the belief, universal in the Fathers of the Church, that the evil demons had been induced by certain incantations and magic rites to enter and abide in statues and fanes, belongs to exactly the same stage of culture. And so also does the belief that by certain theurgic rites a Christian priest

Bearing of
these ideas
on doctrine
of the Incar-
nation.

Transference
of spirits into
material
objects.

¹ Philo, *Vita Abrahami*.

can induct the Spirit of God or of Christ into water or into a new-born child or into bread and wine¹, or into oil, or into a cross or crucifix, or picture, or into a church or shrine, or burial-ground². All these ritual practices, which we may witness to-day in one church or another, originated in an age which believed that the god can be compelled to enter this or that material object by use of his name along with appropriate formulae. In this connexion I have already pointed out that the phrase "laying of a ghost," ἀνάκλισις δαιμόνων, occurs in Origen, who thoroughly believed in the reality of the process of getting a spirit or demon to enter anything or any one.

6. It is a fact too much ignored about the early Christian church that its teachers one and all, with the exception of Jesus and the evangelists, who do not allude to it, believed in the supernatural powers and reality of the old heathen deities. They were all evil spirits; and this belief is the nerve of the resolute refusal of the early Christians to sacrifice even to the *genius* of the emperor. For they believed the genius to be a demon. That we have in the Gospels little or no declamation against the ancient gods and idols, no propaganda of monotheism, is a proof that Jesus addressed himself to Jews alone, who were in no want of such teaching. Accordingly we first meet with it in Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles.

7. A difference of attitude in regard to demons is to be

¹ E. g. in the Liturgy of S. James (Brightman, *Liturgies*, p. 54) the priest prays the Father "to send down his all-holy spirit, that it may approach and with its holy, good and glorious presence sanctify the bread and make it the holy body of Christ." A similar formula comes in most liturgies of the Mass.

² Cp. *Exc. ex Theodot.* 82: "And the head and the oil is hallowed by the power of the name, being the same so far as mere appearance goes as they were when laid hold of, but by power they have been changed into a spiritual power. So also the water in being exorcized, and the baptism in its process not only thrusts out the worse agency, but also acquires in addition the holiness."

traced among the four evangelists. John is silent about possession by demons and does not appear to have ascribed diseases to their agency. In this respect, as in others, he approximates to the mental attitude of a cultivated Alexandrine Jew, such as was Philo. The fourth Gospel is indeed a link between the Synoptists and the cultured Judaism of Egypt. In Luke there is a greater tendency to attribute even simple diseases of the body to demoniac possession than there is in Matthew and Mark, who tend to identify possession with lunacy and madness alone. This tendency of Luke is compatible with his being a physician, for the therapy of the age was exorcismal. It may be remarked that in Lucian's *Philopseustes*, Antigonus the physician excels all the other interlocutors in superstition.

Freedom of
John from
belief in
demons.

8. And now in the course of our inquiry we have incidentally answered, many times over, the question we propounded almost at the outset, as to whether the demonology inside the New Testament is of a piece with demonology outside it.

N. T. de-
mons the
same with
those of
every age.

The answer is yes, no other is possible. Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, The Shepherd of Hermas, Tertullian, Minucius Felix, Origen, all testify that the demons which they saw expelled were of the same kind as those which Jesus cast out. It is in defiance of all reason and logic that most Protestants of to-day accept the demon stories of the New Testament and reject those of the second and succeeding centuries. If we allow one, we must allow the other. In the whole range of patristic literature, going back to a time long anterior to the fixing of the New Testament canon, there is never breathed by any writer the least doubt that the demons of the New Testament were real and active in any sense in which the demons of the subsequent age were not. The view which Dean Farrar is ready to accept, that they were specially created in the life-time of Jesus in order that he might have them to turn out, is therefore the most extraordinary of mental

contortions; and to argue about such a view is, as Prof. Tylor well remarks (in his article on Demonology in the last edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*), too much like arguing whether the world was not flat during the ages in which men believed it to be flat and only became round afterwards, when they abandoned that belief.

Nor is it only the case that the demons of the New Testament are identical with those of Justin, and those of Justin with those of Irenaeus and Origen, and theirs again the same with those of later ages; but all the church writers in turn, as we have seen, attest that the demons exorcized inside the church were the same as those exorcized out of it. None of them raise a doubt as to the reality of the demons expelled by heathen exorcists. Where Christianity had an advantage over other religions was in this, that demons who fled from no other name, yet trembled at that of Jesus Christ. In particular the New Testament and the fathers attest that the Jewish exorcists expelled real demons before, during, and after the lifetime of Jesus.

9. It was one of the chief tasks of Jesus as Messiah to rescue the world from Satan and his angels. That he was at once obeyed by the demons was a prime test and proof of his being the predicted Messiah. There is a curious irony in the history of our religion. The evil demons have been all expelled. They have no longer the engrossing interest for divines which they had for nearly eighteen centuries. It is the folk-lorist or anthropologist, if it is not the policeman or physician, anyhow not the bishop of the diocese or one of his deacons, who nowadays hurries to the remote village where old beliefs linger on and where some one is reputed to have a demon or to be a witch. It was not ever thus. Whence the change? why no demons any more? I should answer that it is free inquiry, a scientific attitude, modern science and modern scepticism, which during the last 150 years

Decay in this
age of belief
in demons

due to Ra-
tionalism
and not to
Christianity.

have rid the civilized world of a burthen which dogmatic theology and Christian rites, and even the New Testament itself, had done nothing to alleviate and much to aggravate during seventeen centuries of undisputed sway. For from the earliest ages the superstitious way of regarding the New Testament as a book not to be impugned must have checked the growth of a more intelligent and humane treatment of lunatics. Origen testified to the antagonism which there was in his time between what we nowadays should call the superstitious and the scientific views; and unhesitatingly ranged himself on the side of superstition: "Let the physicians then," he writes, "give their physiological explanations, since they hold in this connexion that an unclean spirit does not even exist, and that madness is no more than a bodily accident (*σωματικὸν σύμπτωμα*). . . . But we believe in the Gospel and declare that this disease (i.e. *σεληνιασμός* or lunacy and epilepsy) is due to the working of an unclean spirit, dumb and deaf in the persons suffering from it; and we see that those who are accustomed, like the charmers (*ἐπαοιδοῖς*) of the Egyptians, to profess a power of healing in such cases, do actually seem sometimes to succeed in curing them" (*Comm. in Matt.* xiii. 6). Here we see that Origen appeals to the Gospel against the heresies of the "physiologist"; and it is heart-breaking to think how for nearly 2000 years, in Christian countries, lunatics have been, on the authority of the Gospel, alternately flogged and exorcized. Such are the evils which may attend blind reverence for a sacred book. "Saevis sic nos replevit umbr s¹."

The task then of Jesus the Messiah and of his disciples, so far as it consisted in overthrowing and annihilating the evil demons which oppressed mankind, has been fulfilled, but not by Christian priests and exorcists, nor in the manner contemplated by Jesus Christ.

10. The question of the limitations of Jesus' knowledge

¹ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxx. 5.

has been much mooted of late. It shows how timorous and halting any re-examination of main premises must ever be in a religious body organized like our Anglican Church, that the most distinguished advocate of the view that Jesus' knowledge was limited shrinks from adducing his demonological beliefs as a proof of such limitation and weakly tries to make out a case for their validity.

The gospels, through which we look back on Jesus, are media of very different refracting powers, and it is impossible to decide whether Matthew and Mark rationalized or whether Luke was simply superstitious. According as we take one or the other view, we must or must not attribute to Jesus himself the belief that tempests and fevers were demons, and that rheumatism, madness, deafness, and dumbness and all other physical weaknesses were due to demoniacal possession. I myself am convinced that he did so regard them. Anyhow he regarded madness as such. Indeed if we are to credit the gospels at all, we must believe that he was thoroughly immersed in all the popular superstitions of his age concerning evil spirits.

Yet where others used names and spells, he cast out devils with a word. I think his voice and glance must have been fraught with a mesmeric influence.

Any one who has conversed with one demented, must have felt that reason is in him let and hindered by some cruel flaw in its natural vehicle of expression ; yet that it is there, if only one can penetrate behind the barrier that hems it in. In a high, perhaps in an unexampled degree, the manner, the presence, the voice of Jesus must have had this penetrative influence. To the same magic of word and look he must have owed his ascendancy over his disciples. It would seem as if with many he had but to say "Follow me," and they followed him. He won almost at sight the lasting devotion of the strongest natures ; and the entire history of the early church is inexplicable, except on the supposition that his was a strength of per-

sonality such as has rarely, if ever, in historical times belonged to any one. Others, like Mahomet and Napoleon, have had a natural gift of inspiring unlimited confidence in themselves; but where is any one who ever used the authority over others so gained to such pure ends as Jesus? who that ever had such a faculty of using men, had he chosen to do so for ends of his own, was yet so wholly without pride or false ambition? who ever availed himself so exclusively of his gifts in order to inculcate humility and goodness, and nothing else among others? We must not then make it a reproach to Jesus that he envisaged the combat with sin and suffering in the only way in which one born and bred in his surroundings could possibly envisage it, namely as a battle with evil spirits. His whole career betokens that, if any clearer view had lain within his reach, he would not have hesitated to embrace it, merely because the other view was conventional or widespread. He was not of that timorous cast of mind which economizes truth and makes believe to itself that it holds a creed out of which the time-spirit has stolen all life and substance. When Jesus saw that anything was a figment he hastened to denounce it as such.

I confess that, if the spectacle of his demonological belief has any lesson for us at all, it is not that

The moral
for us of his
ignorance.

we should make vaunt of our superior wisdom. It should rather fill us with a deep humility to reflect that, though he shared with his age certain beliefs which, if held to-day, would be rightly termed superstitious, nevertheless he was, as a moral will and character, so much better than the best of men, that the most progressive races of the globe have rightly recognized in his life an almost unapproachable ideal of love and holiness and self-sacrifice.

(Concluded.)

F. C. CONYBEARE.